

2.0 VILLAGE ANALYSIS - LINKS, COMMUNITY AND LOCAL AMENITIES

2.1 South Brent - A Local Centre

South Brent is a popular village in the Dartmoor National Park. It is defined as a 'Local Centre' in the adopted DNPA Development Management Document, and as such has a comprehensive range of services and community facilities, serving local needs and surrounding hinterland. South Brent also benefits from employment provision at the Kingswood Court and Brent Mills business parks. The village has good public transport links to the surrounding areas. The village is highly accessible to Exeter and Plymouth via the A38.

2.2 Community and Village Facilities

There is a strong sense of community in the village. This is focused around three centres; The Old School Community Centre, the Village Hall and the Recreation Association. Events at these centres are well advertised and the local community are clearly highly aware of the activities that are available and participate fully.

The Old School Community Centre provides a hub where groups and organisations can meet and where pre and school age children are supported with both a breakfast club and after school activities. The centre also boasts an on-going community art exhibition.

The Village Hall supports a wealth of fitness and social activities for the whole community, as well as being home to the South Brent Amateur Dramatic Society and the venue for regular cinema evenings.

The Recreation Association, sustaining both the Hall and Park on Palstone Road, are dedicated to providing wider sports and recreation facilities. Successful fund raising over recent years has resulted in a new Adventure Play area and skate park refurbishment projects on site. The group are now seeking new ways to maximise the sites facilities to appeal to a wider audience.

The range of community services also includes the primary school, Moorland Childhood Centre and a large area of allotments. South Brent is served by its own Health Centre, on Plymouth Road, and a Police Station covering the Totnes West area. South Brent also features a number of different denomination churches including the C14th St Petroc's Church.

In addition to the facilities that are available in South Brent, there are also a number of active groups within the local community, (some of whom have contributed towards this brief).

Sustainable South Brent is dedicated to positive action towards sustainable community living. The group has achieved admirable success developing a community owned wind turbine operation and the development of Marsh Re-use and Compost Centre, generating income from donations and recycling credits to help fund other green-minded local initiatives.

There is also The Island Trust, which purchased a redundant area of land some years ago, to secure it as Public Open Space and continues to thrive in its endeavours.

South Brent also has its own popular Art Gallery shop displaying a wealth of local creative talent across the fine arts, fashion and ceramics. It is also in the process of creating a community radio station as well as pursuing the feasibility of re-establishing its station stop on the mainline railway, enabling it to open its self up to a wider population as a 'gateway to the moors'.

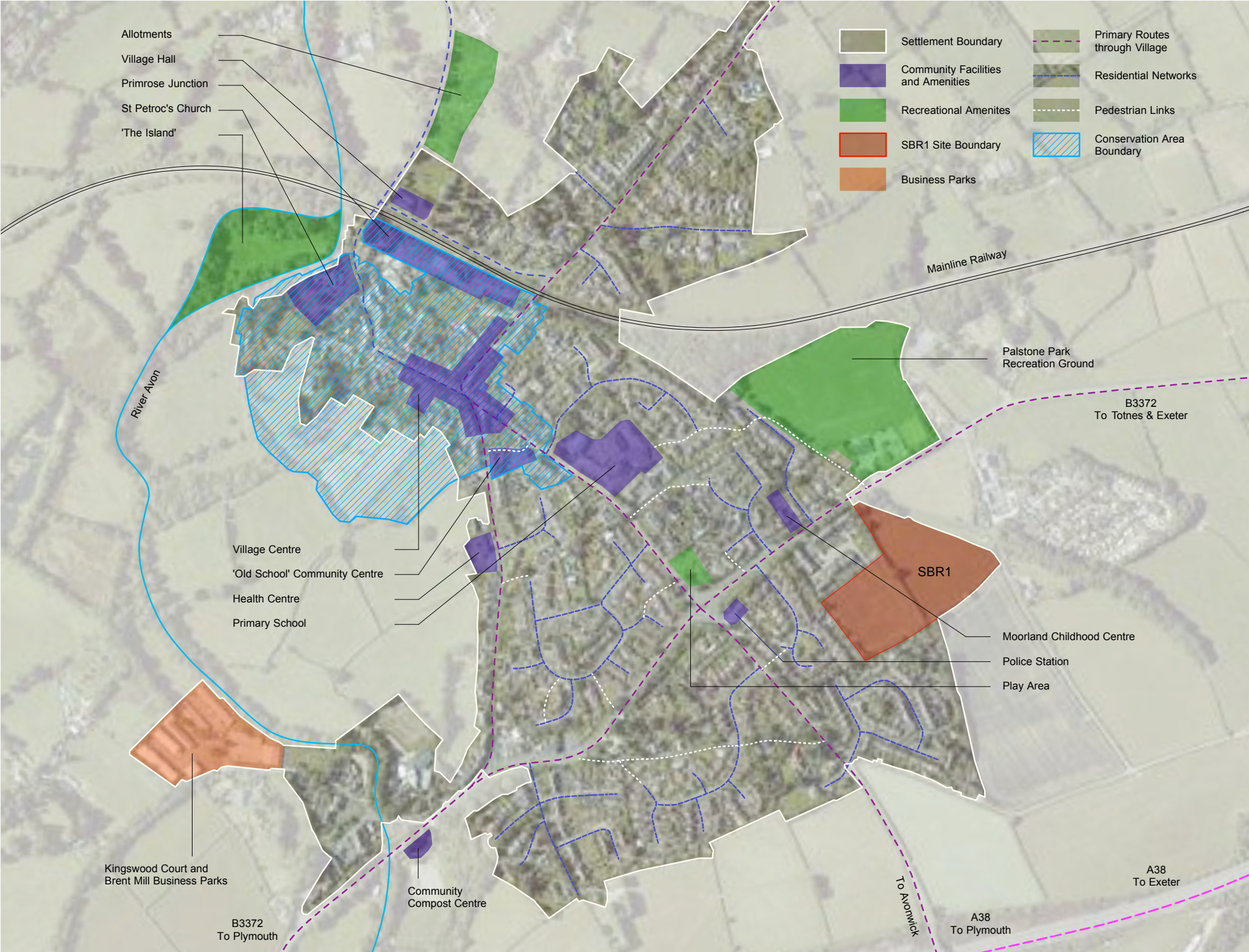


Fig 02. Links and Amenities Diagram



1. Village Centre



2. Kingswood Court Business Park



3. Old School Community Centre



4. Village Hall



5. St Petroc's Church



6. 'The Island'



7. Palstone Park Recreation Ground



3.0 VILLAGE ANALYSIS - URBAN CHARACTER



Long frontages form the edge to the public realm, creating intimate, enclosed streets



Varying building heights and massing offer variety in the street scene



Burgage plot developments have their own unique character



Prominent feature elevations at key points along the routes through the village



Public realm defined by strong edges throughout the historic areas



Pockets of open public space break up the dense linearity of the village experience

The architectural character of South Brent is hard to define, due to the nature of its growth over the years. The historic centre, now a conservation area, has a very clear identity, reflecting the character of most Dartmoor villages, but the majority of subsequent developments have not celebrated this quality. Much of this urban character analysis has been carried out with the South Brent 'Village Design Statement' in mind.

3.1 Village Centre

The medieval village centre comprises heavily developed burgage plots that exemplify the vernacular of South Brent. The buildings are positioned on the back edge of the pavement, presenting an almost continuous facade to the street with very close front to front distances, creating a very enclosed, intimate street experience. Size and scale vary offering variety in the street scene. Buildings and high stone walls create a strong edge to the public realm - whether to the road or to the pockets of wider public space such as Wellington Square.

Typically simple and modest, the buildings are in stone or render, with slate hanging also featuring widely. Windows are generally large with stone or slate cills, doorways are simple, some featuring basic ornamental surrounds. and eaves are clipped. Individual buildings are distinguished by different colour washes, creating quite a colourful environment.

Coach-houses regularly allow access to historic infill development within the burgage plots, creating areas with a distinct character of their own.

3.2 Subsequent Development

Aside from some typical Victorian housing, the expansion to the village occurred after the second world war and comprised local authority built estates in the economically viable style of the period. These are typically cul-de-sac developments of bungalows, semi-detached and detached dwellings.

In contrast to the strong street definition of the historic linear development in the old centre, these estates feature large areas of defensible space to the front, but with little or no boundary definition to the edge of the public realm. As such there is no association with the strong historic identity of South Brent or the wider rural context.

However, more recent developments such as Fairfield and New Orchard have sought to more closely reflect the vernacular style of South Brent.

3.3 Routes

Outside of the historic centre, all principle routes through the village have little in the way of frontage; the public realm generally being defined by walls and hedges, with development being set back having little relationship with the street. This is particularly notable on Exeter Road, which forms by far the largest area of public realm and yet features frontages only at the London Inn development. This principle applies almost to the gateway of the historic centre along Totnes Road, resulting in a rather abrupt perceived start to the built environment.

Vehicular routes through around the village may be constrained by the cul-de-sac nature of most development, but there are a number of pedestrian links throughout the village, offering good permeability and access to amenities and between communities.



Exeter Road, the primary route into the village, features very little in the way of frontage



Gateway to the Village Centre



Later generic sub-urban developments have no relationship with the local character



Inappropriate design results in dwellings having no relationship with the street



More recent developments have sought to reflect the local vernacular style



Pedestrian linkages feature throughout the village creating good permeability and access

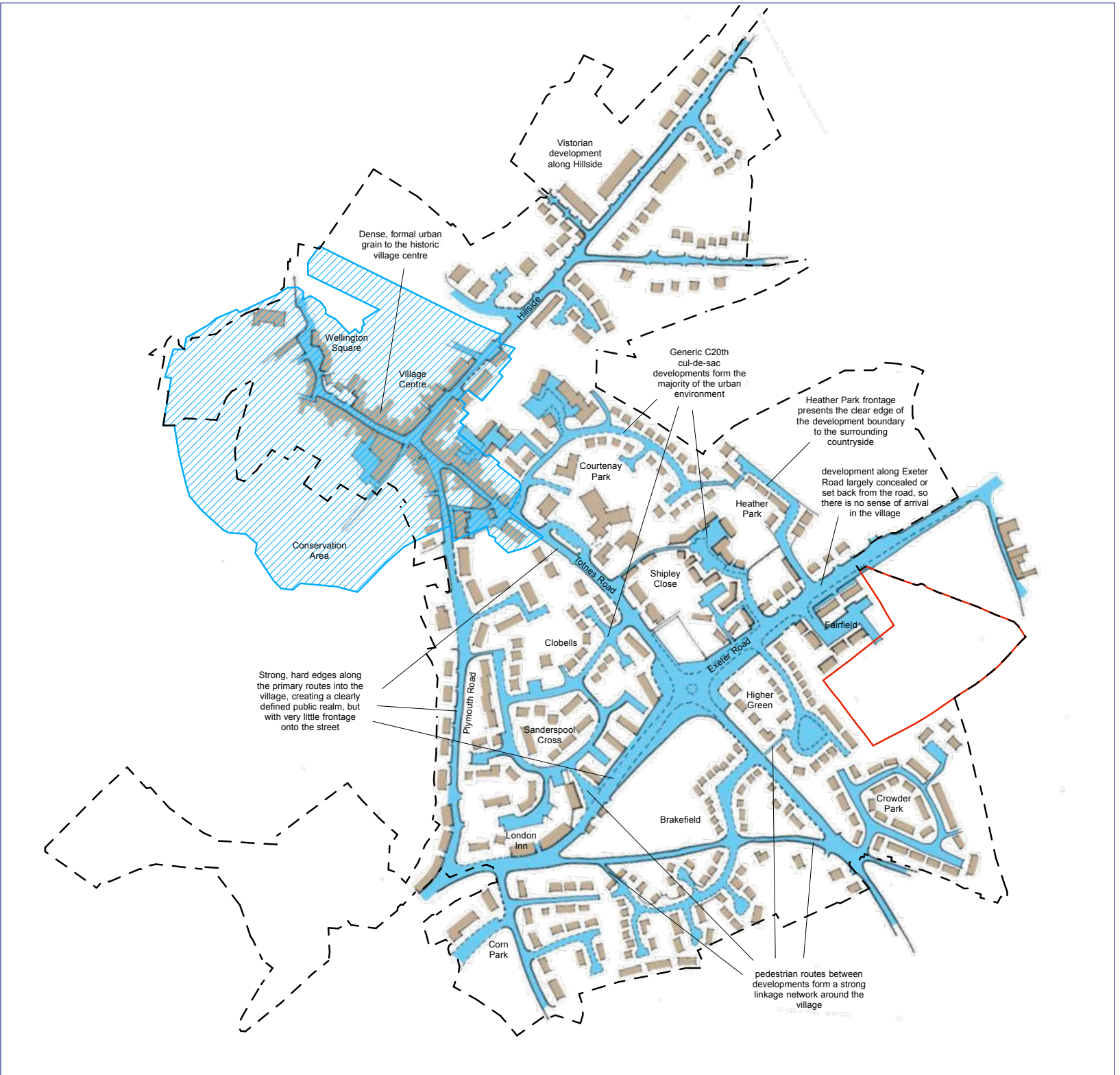


Fig 03. Urban Grain and Public Realm Diagram

4.0 VILLAGE ANALYSIS - ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

4.1 Architectural Detail

The growth of the village over the years has resulted in a wide range of architectural styles and materials, as illustrated by the adjacent photos.

These were exhibited at the Public Consultation, with the community invited to highlight particular elements that they would like to see reflected in a proposed development (illustrated with the red dots).

This exercise, along with the individual discussions highlighted a desire to see the use of traditional materials incorporated into a contemporary design approach. This, combined with the use of vernacular features and details, such as porches and chimneys, will help to relate proposals to the strong identity of the historic village core.



Period

1. C18th dwellings exemplify the historic village character



2. Typical Victorian villas



3. Generic developments of the latter half of the C20th



4. A number of the developments include bungalows



5. More recent developments reflecting the character of the Dartmoor National Park



6. Individual contemporary dwelling



Building Style

07. Formal double fronted period properties



08. Burgage plots often feature coach-houses to allow rear access



09. Bay windows and other architectural features are found in the village



10. Recent pastiche development to reflect the historic style



11. Recent interpretations of the vernacular style



12. Natural, local materials create a sense of rural identity



Public Edges

13. Back of pavement development forming the edge of the public realm



14. Plots with front gardens but no physical boundary to the street



15. Front gardens with low boundaries in wall, hedge or fence offering an edge but no privacy



16. Small areas of defensible space with strong edge to public realm.



17. Strong physical edge clearly defining public/private areas



18. Vegetation also forming hard edge.



Materials

19. Roughcast render with slate cills



20. Natural stone with stone lintels



21. Slate hanging is seen extensively throughout the village, particularly on gables



23. More private areas see palette of materials extended to timber boarding



23. Modern use of render combined with traditional materials and details



24. Timber also features on more contemporary developments



Doors and Windows

25. Traditional door with fanlight over and simple ornamental surround.



26. A range of different porches and canopies feature within the village.



27. Simple openings to historic cottages



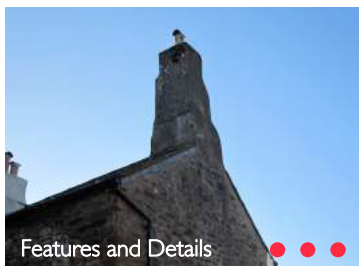
28. Recent developments feature porches and canopies reflecting wider Dartmoor character



29. Historic areas typically feature large windows with sash casements



30. Smaller, simple windows on older cottages



Features and Details

31. Chimneys feature throughout the village, including some of the newer developments



32. Cast iron lamps



33. Simple slate canopies



34. Iron railings



35. Granite planters in public areas



36. Provision of street furniture